

074 Enhancing sustainable tourism practices through the incorporation of welfare standards for wild animals in captivity and in the wild

ALARMED by the lack of animal welfare considerations in sustainable tourism, despite links to zoonotic risks and biodiversity impacts;

CONCERNED that wildlife-based tourism activities, such as captive-animal experiences and unethical wildlife watching, cause animal suffering and disrupt ecosystems;

NOTING the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) *Guidelines for Addressing Disease Risks in Wildlife Trade* (2024), which note that insufficient welfare standards in tourism amplify zoonotic spillover risks;

FURTHER NOTING the importance of Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) resolution 12.23 (Rev.COP14) *Sustainable Tourism and Migratory Species*, which encourages balancing trade-offs between visitor satisfaction, enterprise profitability, species conservation, tourist safety and the welfare of individual animals, and CMS resolution 11.29 (Rev.COP12) *Sustainable Boat-Based Marine Wildlife Watching*, which addresses the negative effects of excessive exposure to wildlife watching boats on target species;

ACKNOWLEDGING that previous IUCN Resolutions, including Resolution 7.130 *Strengthening sustainable tourism's role in biodiversity conservation and community resilience* (Marseille, 2020), Resolution 6.060 *Improving standards in ecotourism* (Hawai'i, 2016), Resolution 5.114 *Promotion of sustainable tourism, rural development and the value of natural heritage* (Jeju, 2012) and Resolution 1.032 *Ecotourism and Protected Areas Conservation* (Montreal, 1996), have highlighted the importance of sustainable tourism but have not addressed animal welfare explicitly;

TAKING INTO ACCOUNT United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) resolution A/RES/77/178 *Promotion of sustainable and resilient tourism, including ecotourism, for poverty eradication and environmental protection*, which highlights sustainable tourism's role in advancing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and One Health frameworks that address zoonotic risks and promote sustainable tourism;

ALSO NOTING the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on tourism and the call for animal-welfare-inclusive recovery strategies to mitigate zoonotic risks;

RECOGNISING that the Nature Positive Tourism Framework, endorsed by leading global agencies in the Nature Positive Tourism Partnership, includes animal welfare as a consideration alongside broader sustainability goals, while APPLAUDING efforts by some tourism organisations for promoting welfare-conscious tourism guidelines and certification standards; and

NOTING MOREOVER the success of Costa Rica's Certification for Sustainable Tourism in integrating environmental and social sustainability;

The IUCN World Conservation Congress 2025, at its session in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates:

1. CALLS ON the Director General, in collaboration with the IUCN Commissions, partner organisations, and the Nature Positive Tourism Partnership, to integrate animal welfare considerations into sustainable tourism guidelines and certification schemes. This includes encouraging governments and tourism operators to align policies with biodiversity conservation and animal welfare goals, adopt science-based monitoring and address zoonotic risks;

2. REQUESTS the Director General and partners to commission research, with priority given to practices implemented by institutions or businesses that are not accredited, certified or otherwise professionally recognised, in order to:

- a. quantify the conservation benefits of improved welfare practices in tourism; and
- b. assess the role of welfare-conscious tourism in reducing zoonotic disease risks;

3. CALLS ON tourism stakeholders to engage in capacity-building programmes that train operators and local communities on the link between improved animal welfare, enhanced conservation and economic outcomes, and reduced risks of zoonotic pathogen emergence, building on existing animal welfare guidelines related to animals in tourism and previous IUCN motions' emphasis on rural development and community resilience; and

4. ENCOURAGES collaboration among governments, non-governmental organisations, private sector stakeholders, and the Nature Positive Tourism Partnership to share best practices and include animal welfare and ethical practices as a consideration in tourism recovery strategies aligned with sustainable practices.